

Peter Dalton Ranch (Joseph Ferretto Ranch)
9005 South Virginia Street
Reno
Washoe County
Nevada

HABS No. NV-22

HABS
NEV
16-RENO
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

**Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107**

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

PETER DALTON RANCH (Joseph Ferretto Ranch)

HABS No. NV-22

Location: 9005 South Virginia Street, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

U.S.G.S. Mt. Rose NE, Nevada Quadrangle (7.5') Universal
Transverse Mercator Coordinates: A 11/261255/4369885,
B 11/261175/4369860, C11/261125/4369775,
D 11/261125/4369680, E 11/261340/4369675

Present Owner: Rose A. Ferretto, et al
510 Toiyabe Street
Reno, NV 89509

Present Occupant: caretaker

Present Use: ranching, storage

Significance: The Dalton-Ferretto Ranch is eligible to the National Register as a district; the four major buildings and the ten outbuildings located on approximately six acres with fencing, an orchard, and other landscape features form an intact late nineteenth century and early twentieth century ranch complex. This ranch is one of the few extant Truckee Meadows ranches. The ranch is eligible under criterion A.

Ranching was the major industry in the Truckee Meadows from shortly after gold was discovered on the Comstock until the middle of the twentieth century. At the turn-of-the-century, agriculture was the largest industry in Washoe County and Reno was the largest city in Nevada. The ranch was owned by Peter Dalton from 1870 to 1910 and Joseph Ferretto and family from 1912 to the present. Dalton cultivated hay and grain, raised cattle, and conducted a dairy. The Ferretto family, an important Italian family in the area, purchased the property in 1912 and Joseph Ferretto ran the ranch. The ranch produced mostly alfalfa and wheat and fed beef cattle during the winter.

The buildings extant on the ranch date from 1868 and includes two houses (1893 and 1926), a barn (circa 1868), a dairy and pump house (circa 1860s and 1912) and ten smaller outbuildings.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. **Date(s) of erection:** See reports on individual ranch buildings.
2. **Architect:** See reports on individual ranch buildings.

3. Original and subsequent owners:

References to the chain of title to the land upon which the structures stand are in the Office of the Recorder, Washoe County Courthouse, Reno, Nevada.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1868 | Patent, December 14, 1868, recorded in Book A, p. 66 of Patents.
US. Government to John S. Bowker. |
| 1869 | Water rights, July 2, 1869, recorded in Book 3, p. 19.
John M. Hunter to John S. Bowker |
| 1870 | Deed. May 9, 1870, recorded in Book 3, p. 209.
John S. Bowker to Peter Dalton
(160 acres) |
| 1900 | Water rights, February 16, 1900, recorded in Book 21, p. 38.
Jane Lake and the Washoe County Bank to Peter Dalton.
(50 inches) |
| | Water rights, April 3, 1900, recorded in Book 21, p. 133.
Jane Lake and the Washoe County Bank to Peter Dalton.
(10 inches) |
| 1910 | Deed, March 16, 1910, recorded in Book 37, p. 269.
Peter Dalton and wife to Robert T. Wilkerson and wife |
| 1912 | Deed, December 4, 1912, recorded in Book 41, p. 244.
Robert Wilkerson to Angelo Ferretto (Faretto), Joe Ferretto, and
John Ferretto. |

B. Historical Context

Overview of Truckee Meadow Ranching

The southern Truckee Meadows is the valley east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, west of the Washoe Range, north of Steamboat Springs, and south of the Truckee River. This area lies within Washoe County, State of Nevada, in sections of Township 18 north, Range 19 east; Township 19 north, Range 20 east; Township 19 north Range 19 east; and Township 19 north, Range 20 east.

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Explorers, frontiersmen, and immigrants passed through the Truckee Meadows in the 1840s and 1850s. Thousands passed through the valley or along the Truckee River and stayed a few days to allow their animals to feed on the native grasses. The Donner Party stopped in the fall of 1846. It has been said that the water and forage of the Truckee Meadows beguiled them into a delay that was fatal. The 1850s saw the first permanent settlers homestead in the Truckee Meadows. A Mormon named Jamison is credited with establishing the first permanent white settlement along the Truckee River called Jamison's Station¹. The Mormon agricultural settlers sent to the western counties of Utah in 1855 by Brigham Young, the Utah Territorial Governor, settled in the Truckee Meadows, as well as in Washoe, Jacks, and Carson Valleys.

Scattered ranches and stations were settled in the valley along the travel routes. Agriculture in the Truckee Meadows began as harvesting the native grasses for fodder used by the immigrants on their way to the California gold fields.

In 1858, Granville W. Huffaker drove the first herd of cattle into the Truckee Meadows² and established his ranch/station. Huffaker selected his land at the intersection of the north-south and east-west travel routes. This location changed Huffaker Station from a ranch headquarters to the largest station in the valley complete with post office, hotels, saloons, express yards, and livery stables. As many as 300 people lived around Huffaker's Station in the mid 1860s. Huffaker planted alfalfa to feed the thousands of mules, horses, and oxen in the area. Peleg Brown, another early settler, built the first fieldstone house near Steamboat Springs, south of Huffaker's Station³.

The first settlers in the Truckee Meadows were northern Europeans from England, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries. With the discovery of wealth on The Comstock, the number of settlers increased, as did the demand for agricultural products and livestock. The rapid growth of Virginia City, Gold Hill, Silver City, Dayton, Washoe City, and other mill towns increased the demand for hay and grain for work animals and for flour, potatoes, butter, cheese, milk, and beef for human consumption. As the area prospered, the demand for fruits and vegetables increased. Apple and peach trees were planted and in 1874, Washoe County produced 6,000 bushels of apples⁴.

In 1868, native forage provided approximately 5,000 tons of hay for grazing livestock⁵ and The Comstock market. The cutting of native hay was replaced by alfalfa; it was first planted in the Truckee Meadows in mid 1860s. Peleg Brown and Erwin Crane of Steamboat are often credited with pioneering alfalfa farming in the Meadows⁶. Potatoes were raised as a second crop, a cash crop, especially by the Irish settling in the Truckee Meadows in the 1860s.

¹Angel, Myron. History of Nevada. 1881. p. 623.

²Hummel, N. A. General History & Resources of Washoe County, Nevada. 1888.p. 14.

³Townley, John, Tough Little Town on the Truckee. 1983. p.41.

⁴Creel, Cecil W. A History of Nevada Agriculture. State Printing Office, 1964. p.7.

⁵Townley, 121.

⁶Angel, Myron. History of Nevada. 1881. p. 632.

Once the farmer possessed the land, he would set corners, dig a well, clear some land, irrigate it, and seed it. The farmer then would plant his orchard. In the Truckee Meadows, summer, autumn, and spring apples were grown along with peaches, pears, cherries, and plums. In western Nevada valleys from Susanville south past Genoa fruit was grown as an industry and supplied the California towns with fresh produce. When California began developing its own fruit industry, many of the Nevada farmers abandoned their orchards as an industry. Today, orchards can be seen in the old areas where each ranch grew its own.

Water was first diverted from the Truckee River in the late 1850s. During the 1860s and 1870s, miles of ditches were built to irrigate thousands of acres. This complicated system of water delivery was the result of associations of ranchers banding together to build and maintain their irrigation ditches. The ditches were financed by the profits from selling hay and feeding cattle. Among others, the Hatch & Lake Ditch was built in 1865; the Cochrane in 1862-64; the Southside and Last Chance Ditches in the mid 1870s and the Steamboat Ditch in 1878⁷. The most important was the Truckee Ditch, seventeen miles long, running from the Mayberry bridge and bringing water to Brown's Station⁸. Water is the life blood of agriculture in the Truckee Meadows, many of these ditches are still in use today.

The arrival of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1868 and its completion in 1869 created the town of Reno on the Truckee River as an important freight and passenger center. The railroad opened a greater market area for the agricultural products of the Truckee Meadows. Before the Central Pacific, the hay raised in the Truckee Meadows was sold to teamsters for the animals pulling wagons to and from The Comstock and over the Sierras to California. While the teamster trade was greatly diminished by the railroad, the Truckee Meadow's market for alfalfa continued to increase with cattle feeding more than taking up the slack. The market changed in the early 1870s with the shipping of cattle from Oregon, northern California, and eastern Nevada to Reno for a final fattening before shipment to the Bay Area of California. The decline of The Comstock demand was almost unnoticed by the Truckee Meadow ranchers. The California demand for beef was a larger market. During the mid-1870s half of San Francisco's beef supply - over 80,000 head per year - was supplied by Nevada⁹.

Sheep were introduced to Nevada and the Truckee Meadows in 1867 by D C. Wheeler. Wheeler, one of the State's authorities on the sheep industry, initially brought sheep from Oregon. He later imported Shrophires and French Merinos to his ranch located on Virginia Ranch Road.¹⁰

John Townley in his book, Tough Little Town on the Truckee, talks about the ranches of the 1870s.

⁷Peckham, George E. "Reminiscences of an Active Life". pp. 64-65.

⁸Townley. p. 137.

⁹Creel. p. 9.

¹⁰Creel. p.10-11.

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1870s federal census provides interesting statistics on the valley. Only fifty-odd ranches shared the Meadows, each spread over hundreds of acres of pasture and alfalfa patches. Half of Washoe County's 3091 residents found homes in the valley, with two of three inhabitants counted in Reno's precincts.

The typical ranch, called farms by census enumerators, appeared almost self-sufficient. Headed usually by man and wife, including relatives and numerous children, many also kept two or more laborers and their families. Ranch headquarters often had carpenters or other craftsmen in residence. Chinese cooks were popular, as were female "housekeepers." The typical ranch contained a half-dozen residents at minimum, with blends of generations, birthplaces, and languages - a third were foreign-born.¹¹

Reclamation of marshlands and the development of irrigation systems increased production of crops. Land prices doubled in the 1870s due to the demand for alfalfa. By the end of the 1870s, alfalfa production had tripled to 15,000 tons. All the public land in the Truckee Meadows was claimed by 1876.¹² The 1860s and 1870s were good and simple times for agriculture in the Truckee Meadows. The hay harvest and winter feeding contracts were a dependable market.

Townley continues to describe agriculture in the Truckee Meadows.

Despite flirtations with truck farming, agriculture in the valley surrounding Reno kept to its hay crop during the 1880s, to feed 5,000-10,000 cattle and 30,000-50,000 sheep from December to May annually. Even if hay prices were no longer what they had been during the Comstock's heyday, this familiar, stable crop regularly provided satisfactory income for large and small ranches¹³.

The sheep industry continued to grow through the 1890s. It was reported by the Governor in 1887 that 43,000 head of sheep and 3 million pounds of wool were sold out-of-state¹⁴.

After 1877, and the first water shortage in the Truckee Meadows, water was no longer taken for granted. Steps were taken to protect water rights and insure enough water in dry years. Water litigation began. There was much discussion of upgrading the use of the water from alfalfa to more labor intensive cash crops. Truck farms and orchards were discussed. The Orientals grew vegetables and fruit in their in-town patches. The Italians who were coming into the Truckee Meadows in the late 1870s were accustomed to a similar environment in northern Italy, had experience irrigating and fertilizing and became intensive farmers.

The community of Huffaker's gained further prominence in 1875 when it began serving as the loading point for lumber and firewood for The Comstock. Wood

¹¹Townley. p. 124.

¹²Townley, p. 125.

¹³Townley, p. 132.

¹⁴Creel. p.11.

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floated down a V-flume from Mackay & Fair's lumber operation on Mount Rose and was loaded on to V&T rail cars. Italian woodcutters worked the operation until it closed in 1881. Many of the woodcutters settled on land along South Virginia, built homes, and established ranches.

Beef and hay continued to be the major agricultural pursuit in the late Nineteenth Century. Meat prices were low and there was a glut of beef in the West in the 1890s, so newcomer and ex-Texan John Sparks started shipping cattle east to the Midwest market. Truckee Meadows ranchers cooperated and sent whole trains of beef to the Midwest.

The 1880s saw a diversification of ranches. Alfalfa crops were supplemented by wheat, and flour mills were established. At the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, H. H. Beck of the Riverside Mill took first place for his flour. A few ranches specialized in potatoes, vegetables, fruit, berries, or poultry; the production and marketing of these products were much more complicated than alfalfa. The 1890s saw the development of dairy herds and creameries. Milk production was modernized in 1902 with the invention of the milking machine.¹⁵

David Thompson in Nevada: A History of Changes talks about the Italians ranching in Nevada.

During the late nineteenth century, many new settlers of Italian origin arrived in Nevada. They raised garden vegetables along the Carson River, on the Truckee Meadows, and along the Walker River, using land they leased or rented from other ranchers. By saving their profits, these Italian-American ranchers were able to buy the land they were farming.¹⁶

Ranching and farming continued to grow in Nevada and in the Truckee Meadows both in numbers of farms and number of acres cultivated. The following figures were reported in the Census of Agriculture by the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census.

Date	# Farms in Nevada	Total Acreage	Avg. Size of Farm
1860	91	14,132 acres	616 acres
1870	1,036	92,644	201
1880	1,404	344,423	378
1890	1,277	723,052	1,301
1900	2,184	572,946	1,174
1910	2,689	752,117	1,009
1920	3,163	594,741	745

At the turn-of-the-century, agriculture was the largest industry in Washoe County and Reno was the largest town in the state. The predominance of agriculture in the

¹⁵Bell, Walter R. The Production of Market Milk. 1934. p.4.

¹⁶Thompson, David. Nevada: A History of Changes. 1986. p. 129.

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Truckee Meadows during the Nineteenth Century continued into the early Twentieth Century and then began to fade with the urbanization of the area, the development of the tourism industry, and the opening of other agricultural lands through increased irrigation.

World War I was a boon to agriculture throughout the country and the Truckee Meadows was no exception. Herds of cattle and flocks of sheep were increased and all irrigatable land was brought into production. The principal products of the Truckee Meadows were alfalfa, potatoes, onions, and dairy products. The demand for all agricultural products was high, but as labor was short, labor costs were also high, thus reducing profits. Most farmers and ranchers weathered the post World War I recession. The 1920s were good times for Northern Nevada agriculture; sheep, cattle, and dairy products produced the most revenue. The Northern California market continued to grow much faster than Nevada could supply.

After 1914, another wave of Italian immigrants swept into the valley. These men purchased small properties and contributed to the economy with truck farm produce. By the 1920s a majority of the southern Truckee Meadows was owned by Italian immigrants or descendants. A 1921 ditch map of the southern Truckee Meadows shows a large number of Italian landowners. (See the Italian overview for the names and locations.)

Washoe County agriculture was still important in the 1920s. The following summary was written in the Nevada Newsletter in 1927.

Agriculturally Washoe county ranks as one of the richest counties in Nevada according to the Department of Commerce census of agriculture for the year 1925. Of the 17 counties in the state, Washoe ranked first in the total number of farms, second in the value of farm lands and buildings, second in the value of livestock on farms, third in the land area in crops, second in the land area in farms, first in value of dairy products, third in the value of wool production and first in the value of poultry and poultry products.

The following statistics on agriculture in Washoe County may prove of interest. In 1910 there were 367 farms in the county, while in 1925 there were 566 with 84% of the farms owned by the operators in the latter year. In 1910 there were 195,286 acres in farms as against 607,502 acres in 1925. In the year 1925 the value of farm property, including livestock, in Washoe County amounted to \$14,919,283. of which \$3,654,354 was livestock. The value of various commodities produced in 1924 was as follows:

Dairy products	\$485,382.	
Wool	\$630,220.	
Poultry	\$238,195.	
Farm Crops	\$911,925.	
Grand total		\$2,265,722. ¹⁷

¹⁷Walker, E. H. "Washoe County". Nevada Newsletter: Reno, NV It's Sources. 1927 Annual Magazine. June 25, 1927. p. 32

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Nevada, particularly Reno, became a Mecca for the divorce trade in the 1920s and 1930s. The combination of press coverage of the 1906 divorce of the President of the US. Steel Company and the 1920 divorce of Mary Pickford and the "loose" legal grounds for divorce in Nevada attracted many to become residents of Nevada for a short time. Before 1927, the residency requirement was 6 months, in 1927 that was changed to 3 months and in 1931 reduced again to 6 weeks. These soon-to-be divorcees needed a place to stay and many choose dude ranches and the rustic accommodations of the Truckee Meadows. Some of the agricultural ranches of the Truckee Meadows accommodated this trade. "US 395 goes south through the fertile Truckee Valley with signs on both sides of the road advertising 'Guest Ranches' for divorcee-seekers who prefer the moonlight and tree toads and the smell of the countryside to the gay spots of the Biggest Little City in the World"¹⁸. Eventually, other states passed more realistic divorce laws and the dude ranches disappeared.

The 1930-1932 years were the low point for many Nevada farmers and ranchers; the worldwide depression and the 1931 drought caused a \$12 million loss in revenue in Nevada agriculture between the years 1929 and 1932¹⁹. In October 1932, many of the Nevada banks with agricultural loans were forced to close and many of the established farmers and ranchers were bankrupt. In 1933, state and federal agencies helped many farmers and ranchers refinance. The Truckee Meadows operations were saved in 1934 when water was pumped from Lake Tahoe into the Truckee River.

The Truckee Meadows was still considered a prime agricultural valley in the 1930s and 1940s; known for dairying, alfalfa, grain, fruit, vegetables, hog raising, cattle, sheep, and turkeys. World War II was again a time of high production. Labor was again short and Mexican nationals assisted in putting up hay, irrigating fields, and planting and harvesting crops.

The number of farms in Washoe County increased and then decreased during the Twentieth Century. The following figures were reported in the Census of Agriculture by the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census.

# Farms in Washoe County		Avg. Size of Farm
1900	331 farms	
1910	367 farms	
1925	566 farms	
1945	509 farms	1221 acres
1950	420 farms	1825 acres
1954	465 farms	1942 acres
1959	244 farms	5070 acres
1969	203 farms	4290 acres
1974	176 farms	5185 acres
1978	218 farms	4290 acres

¹⁸Writer's Program of the Work Projects Administration. Nevada: A Guide to the Silver State. Portland, OR: Binford & Mort, 1940. p. 193.

¹⁹Creel. p.21.

1982

300 farms

2912 acres

Between the mid 1940s and the mid 1960s agriculture continued to grow in Nevada, but not in the Truckee Meadows. Urban expansion in the Reno area moved dairy, poultry, hay, potato, and onion production to more distant valleys. The spread of the urban portions of the Truckee Meadows has diminished the agricultural area in the last forty years but especially in the last twenty. Ranch lands have been sold to developers and subdivided into housing tracts and commercial and industrial areas. There are not many meadows left in the Truckee Meadows.

The Italians in the Truckee Meadows

Italian immigration patterns in the United States (1820-1880) show a steady increase, cresting in the years following the American Civil War and then again following the turn of the century. Immigration figures show that almost 100,000 Italians, primarily men, came to the United States in each of the years between 1860 though the mid 1890's. Excepting the Italian Jesuits who were expelled from Italy in 1848-1850, most of the Italian immigrants making the odyssey to the United States were peasants, many illiterate and unskilled, who provided a cheap, plentiful, and exploitable labor force for the rapid post war industrialization.

The early Italian imprint on Nevada was primarily a Northern Italian movement with immigrants coming from the coastal region of Genoa and Piedmonte—including Lake Como and Ticino, the Italian canton of Switzerland, and Tuscany, especially the duchy of Lucca. Why the heavy concentration of Northern Italians in Nevada? The first choice for many immigrants was South America, but when malaria became rampant in Brazil during the 1870's and Argentina experienced political upheaval, many Italians chose the United States. The Great Basin was particularly attractive—there are similarities between the Northern Italian Provinces and Nevada, mountainous with cold winters and hot summers. The climate is dry; row crops are irrigated. In Tuscany, cattle raising is conducted in much the same manner as in Nevada - with open grazing and livestock rounded-up each fall by cowboys. There were also greater employment opportunities in the West, especially Nevada with her silver mines. Italian immigration followed the *Paesani* principle—family, friends, fellow villagers, are *paesani*. They welcomed fellow Italians, and in some cases arranged and paid passage to Nevada. Knowing Nevada had *paesani* contributed greatly to Nevada's attractiveness as a destination.

Many Italians came to the United States to earn money, then returned home, sometimes again to hunger or to die; others re-emigrated. This migratory pattern led the Italian immigrants to be called: "birds of passage". It is interesting to note on a national scale 800,000 Italian immigrants returned to Italy between 1890-1910. Wilbur Shepperson talks about this repatriate activity calling it a "fluid" movement, men returning to the homeland to find a wife, to start a family. By 1910-20, many of Italian immigrants coming to Nevada had been Americanized writes Shepperson, either having established a prior residence in America before coming to Nevada or being simply a bird of passage.

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By 1900, Italian-born immigrants made up two-tenths of one percent of the population of the United States, while they composed three percent of the Nevada population. Nevada contained a larger percentage of Italian settlers, twice that of any state west of the Mississippi River.²⁰ Shepperson tell us that by 1910, one fourth of Nevada's foreign born were Italian; of Nevada's population recorded by the 1910 census, 17,999 Nevadans were counted, 2,831 of which were Italian.²¹ The large Italian settlements in the Truckee Meadows and Dayton already were flourishing. Italians went to Fallon and Yerington to farm and some went to White Pine County, Tonopah, and Goldfield to work in the mines.

Louis Gardella tells in his oral history about his father's experience of arriving in Reno in 1889 from Genoa, Italy.

"I don't know why he came to Reno, but I presume it was because some of the neighbors had been here and reported that this was the land of milk and honey. He borrowed money...bought a ticket and wound up in Reno.

One of the strange things, a coincidence happened when he got off the train in Reno. He was wonderin' where to go and he walked across the street and the first man he noticed was one of his neighbors from the town he was born in!"
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The desire for land becomes a central theme in the Italian immigrant story-"*Chi ha pratto, ha tutto*, he who has land has everything." The Italians became the purveyors of agricultural products to The Comstock, especially poultry. A Mr. Giocchio said his father regretted most not being able to buy land in the Truckee Meadows in 1867. Reno lots were but \$100, but all transactions had to be in gold. His father had the money, silver and railroad script, but he was unable to transfer it into gold in time for the land sale. The Italian poultry men of Empire, probably the Empire Ranch near Carson City, and then Lake's Crossing (Truckee Meadows) became the great suppliers of Western Nevada.

While the most information available on Italians immigrants centers on The Comstock and the Truckee Meadows, large Italian settlements were also established in Dayton, Verdi, Eureka, and Paradise Valley, followed later by Fallon and Yerington.

John Townley writes in his book Tough Little Town on the Truckee of the Italians in the following paragraphs.

First attracted to logging work on Mount Rose in the mid-1870's, families took up ranches in an Italian belt south of Reno around Brown's and Steamboat once Comstock lumber demands dropped dramatically after 1878 and Mackay & Fair's camps shut down. Relatives and others arrived in a steady

²⁰Shepperson, Wilbur. Restless Strangers. p. 14.

²¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910. 1913. p.83.

²²Gardella, Louis A. Justing Passing Through: My Work in Nevada Agriculture, Agricultural Extension, and Western Water Resources. 1973. p. 2.

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stream that made them the largest foreign-born minority - but for northern Europeans - in the valley.

Obvious is the widespread prejudice toward the Italian immigrant within the Meadows. Their failure to assimilate, learn English, and lose an ethnic distinction, was resented by older residents. The Italians arrived at a time when open immigration began to be questioned nationally. Outside the earlier English-German pattern of behavior, attitudes and customs, Italians were seen as ignorant, unsanitary and Roman Catholic. Suspicious of their neighbors - with good reason - initially the Italians clustered together, visited and married among themselves, kept their children from local schools and did little to relieve an almost universal illiteracy brought direct from the old country.

Prejudice was overcome by hard work and plenty of it. Alone, among a valley filled by hay ranchers, the Italians practiced that intensive agriculture preached by reclamationists. From the first, they carefully and unceasingly plowed manure into their fields, collecting it from all over the Meadows by wagon. Less ambitious neighbors chortled at the sight of Italian husband men cleaning out stables and corrals anywhere in the valley, thinking them crazy, but crop yields jumped in the Italians' fields and proved the point. Only a few years were necessary to demonstrate that the valley's potential for truck farming had barely been tapped.

There were occasional exchanges between Italians and the early settlers, usually during political campaigns, yet despite obvious discrimination they prospered. Slowly, their children entered the schools and found their way into business. By the end of the century, Italian families acquired much of the croplands of the western half of the valley from Steamboat to Verdi.²³

After the turn-of-the-century, Reno and the Truckee Meadows was the area where the Italians invested. Both the ranches of the Truckee Meadows and the "Little Italy" area of downtown Reno were concentrations of Italian wealth. The 1910 census records 372 Italians in Reno. In 1930, 637 were recorded. The Italians were the largest foreign born ethnic group in Reno and Washoe County, as well as the largest native born of foreign born parents. Twentieth Century Italians assimilated quickly unlike their Nineteenth Century counterparts.

Both Annie Estelle Prouty and Alice Frances Trout, in penning their master theses in 1917 and 1916, wrote about the Italian development in the Truckee Meadows. Ms Prouty wrote that although the Truckee Meadows was once a hay stop for the overland traveler, today, "Many of the ranches are owned by Italians who are excellent gardeners, thrifty and make good citizens."²⁴ Ms Trout wrote: "Our sturdy Anglo-Saxon settlers are being rapidly replaced by Italians, particularly in the Truckee Meadows. Four-fifths of the land is now owned by Italians. The reason

²³Townley, John. Tough Little Town on the Truckee. 1983. p. 232.

²⁴Prouty, Annie Estelle. "The Development of Reno," Nevada Historical Society Papers, 1924. p.123.

is not far to seek. As a people the later are content to begin on a small scale, live below our standard until their financial condition will warrant a home and an automobile."²⁵

A 1921 ditch map of the southern Truckee Meadows shows a large number of Italian landowners:

Angelo Balsi
H. Bersani
Capurro & Laiolo
B. & A. Casazza
David Casazza
Paulo Casazza
A. Cerfoglio
D. & P. Cerfoglio
Angelo Faretto
A. Faretto & Sons
Catherine Faretto
Domingo Fillpelli
N. Fillpelli
S. Geravanta
Nick Ginnochio
Guilo Lombardi
J. P. Maddalena
F.A. Pecetti
J. B. Pecetti
Pietro Pecetti
Domingo Pezzi
A. Pincolini
John Prosole
Louis Prosole
E. F. Questa
Quilici & Company
G. Zolezzi.

With the depression years there was a leanness everywhere, but the Italians, even those who lived in town, had vegetable gardens, chickens and rabbits, and were fairly self sufficient. The Great Drought Years of 1929, 1930, and 1931 took a heavy toll. Ranchers and farmers had borrowed heavily against their businesses. As money grew tighter, the banks foreclosed. The Great Depression sealed the fate of many ranchers and farmers. With so few jobs available, it became impossible for the farmers/ranchers to recoup and rebuild. The great Italian farming dynasties survived the on-slaught -- the Quilicis and Cappuros of Reno; the Lommoris, Massinis and Aiazis of Yerington; and the Reconzones of Paradise. The unpredictableness of Italy's economic situation had prepared them well. They knew to be frugal enough to set aside for the eventual lean years. There was a mistrust of

²⁵Trout, Alice Frances. "Religious Development in Nevada," Nevada Historical Society Papers, 1917
p. 148.

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banks among the country folk. Money was kept in gold coins and was generally well hidden on their ranches. The Italian farms were self-sufficient and they understood irrigation.

An Italian district evolved in Reno. The Italian language press flourished. Three Italian newspapers were published at various times; *The Italian- French Colony News* (1907), *Corriere di Nevada* (1907-1908), and the *Boteltini Del Nevada* (1915-1944).

The resources remaining of the Italian District of Reno are located on Lake and Second Streets. It was never an exclusive community; Basques, Chinese and French maintained shops and businesses there. But it was there that Italians could buy their wines, their cigars, their foreign delicacy, purchase a travel ticket, or buy insurance. *Paesani*. The Italian hotels located in the actual Italian district included, the Mizpah, owned by the Pincolini family and the Colombo and the Toscano. All were noted for their comfortable lodging and wonderful five course dinners. Bruno and Guido Pincolino later refurbished the El Cortez Hotel which is a fine example of Art Deco architecture. The Senator, built by Leopoldo and Teresa Saturno, one of Reno's more prominent families, is located near the Cortez on Second and West Streets, and was also a well known Italian hotel. Santino Piazza built the Saint Francis Hotel in 1925.

The Italians were prominent in fraternal and social organizations including Reno's Prospectors Club. The most significant impact the Reno Italians have made has been in banking industry. An Italian bank was established early on in the 1920s. Reno's prominent Italian families have always had a family member or two involved in banking, the Quilicis, Questas, Cassinellas, Martinellis, and Aiazis. The banks provided social mobility for the Italians, and in kind these few men worked hard to give something back to their community.

The Peter Dalton/Joseph Ferretto Ranch

John S. Bowker, the first owner of the property, owned the ranch briefly from 1868 to 1870. In that time he had a barn, bunkhouse, and blacksmith building built. He also acquired water rights in 1869. Bowker was a deputy Washoe County Clerk (1863), later a Justice of the Peace in Reno, and in 1877, a deputy county recorder and auditor. There is no evidence to suggest that he was a farmer or rancher. During the time that he owned the property he is listed as working as an accountant and living in Reno.

The second owner of the property was Peter Dalton (1840-1923). He was responsible for most of the nineteenth century improvements made to the property. In 1873, he married Margaret Welsh of Carson City.

Thomas Wren in his History of Nevada in 1904 wrote the following about the Dalton Ranch.

...and then with the capital which he had acquired through his own efforts he purchased one hundred and sixty acres of land, upon which but few improvements had been made. With characteristic energy he began its further development and continued the work of cultivation and improvement until a splendid property was the result. He added to this from time to time as his financial resources increased until four hundred and sixty-five acres were comprised within its borders and constituted one of the best farms in this part of the state. He engaged in the cultivation of hay and grain and also raised graded Durham cattle, having some full-blooded bulls. For several years he likewise conducted a dairy, keeping from thirty-five to forty cows for this purpose. Mr. Dalton was also one of the builders of the Steamboat Ditch...

George Peckham described Peter Dalton in his "Reminiscences of an Active Life" in the following paragraph.

Among the old Nevada boys who are deserving of something more than honorable mention is Peter Dalton, who first came to Nevada in 1866 and located permanently here in 1868. He purchased a farm in the Huffaker district about 1870. Prior to 1892 he was one of the leading Democrats of that district and was a very able debater from a Democratic standpoint and had many friendly discussions during the '70s and '80s with his neighbors on those old-time issues.

The Dalton Ranch was further described in a newspaper article titled "A Fertile Valley" which appeared in the Reno Evening Gazette on September 8, 1897 and highlighted several ranchers and their property in the Truckee Meadows.

A man noted for his good nature and wit, Mr. Peter Dalton owns 465 acres of the best land the sun ever shone upon. His dwelling is a model of neatness and his outbuildings are all in good repair. The beauty of Mr. Dalton's place is that it has no mortgage, and he has money in the bank. He has 300 acres in alfalfa and natural grasses that yield about four tons per acre of alfalfa, and the grass goes about two tons. He usually feeds his hay to beef cattle, and he has one of the choicest feeding grounds in the valley. He has an orchard that yields over two hundred boxes of apples, that he finds a market for in Reno. He has a little bunch (70 head) of stock cattle, and makes an independent living and is laying up money for his old age.

Mrs. Dalton devotes much of her time to the raising of chickens and turkeys. She markets her products that she does not require for her own table in Reno.

PETER DALTON RANCH (Joseph Ferretto Ranch)
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Mr. Dalton's place is well improved and he thinks he has done his share toward reclaiming the country, and wants to sell and move to town. The place would make a comfortable home for any family, and if cut up into small holdings would support several. Mr. Dalton will sell it on very easy terms, giving the purchaser thirteen years to pay for it with interest at six per cent. His stables and corrals are all in first class condition and the place is under a high state of cultivation. A purchaser would only have to move in, and go to making money right away.

In 1902, Peter and Margaret Dalton retired from ranching and moved into a house at 328 South Virginia Street, Reno. By 1910, the property was transferred to Robert T. Wilkerson and his wife, Lottie Wilkerson.

Robert T. Wilkerson worked the ranch from 1902 when he began to purchase it from Peter Dalton. In 1904, Wilkerson organized the Wilkerson Land and Stock Company with two major stock holders, himself (\$10,850) and his wife, Lottie Wilkerson (\$10,000) and three minor stockholders, H. T. Wilkerson (\$50), Lee Wilkerson (\$50), and W. N. Merrill (\$50). The place of business for the company was the Wilkerson Ranch in Washoe County. Payments were made on the property until 1910 when the deed was recorded. The Wilkersons owned the property until 1912 when Mr. Wilkerson underwent an appendectomy and sold the property to the Ferrettos.

In 1912, the Ferretto family, Angelo (1850-1931) and his two sons John P. and Joseph B. (1880-1971), purchased the property. Joseph B. Ferretto, his wife Rose Faretto Ferretto and their two daughters, Grace and Genevieve moved into the property.

The Ferretto family traces their Nevada history to Angelo's father, Guiseppi(?), who came to the Comstock from Genoa, Italy. He sent for his son, Angelo, who arrived in 1866 at the age of 16. The following is a paragraph from a family history written by John P. Ferretto within The Early Day Families of Washoe County compiled in 1964 by the Bicentennial Commission.

Angelo's first job after leaving mining was loading camels with wood from the timber belt surrounding Virginia City, Nevada. Forced to abandon camels as bearers of burdens, by state law, he entered the employ of French Pete in the Six Mile Canyon (Virginia City). While there, Mr. Ferretto learned to speak French fluently.

Once established, Angelo Ferretto was joined by his fiancée, Colombia Avansino from Genoa, Italy. The Ferrettos were parents to six children, two of whom survived into adulthood, Joseph B. and John P.

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Angelo Ferretto began cutting wood in the winter and freighting it to Virginia City. Thus began his twenty five plus year career as a teamster. Angelo Ferretto began buying ranch land in the Huffaker area of the Truckee Meadows in 1892. Angelo and his two sons, Joseph and John ran a freight line between Reno and Virginia City until about 1912. The Ferrettos freighted a variety of supplies to Virginia City from Reno with 16 horse teams and a jerk line.

Angelo ran his ranch, located west of this property, until 1925 when he and Colombia moved into Reno and lived on Center Street. Angelo Ferretto, a hard-working and generous man, helped many new immigrants to the Truckee Meadows get a start. He spoke fluent Italian, English, French, and Chinese and was known to always have a house full of those less fortunate.

By 1912, the Ferrettos had three ranches in the southern Truckee Meadows. Angelo continued to ranch his original ranch and Joseph and John each had 250 acre ranches along South Virginia Road. Joseph and his family lived on this property and John owned the ranch to the north, along Huffaker Lane. In 1905, Joseph Ferretto married Rose Faretto of Huffakers.

The ranch produced mostly alfalfa and wheat. The majority of the work centered around raising the alfalfa and wheat and feeding beef cattle during the winter. William H. Moffat, cattle rancher and owner of the H. Moffat Packing Company in San Francisco, paid the Ferrettos to feed some of his cattle each winter.

A dairy herd was milked from approximately 1912 and 1920. The milk was sold to the Crescent Creamery. Butter was produced and sold. Potatoes were planted at one time. A small orchard produced apples. A few pigs and chickens were raised for consumption by the family.

Rose Ferretto and family still owns the property today.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Site

1. **General setting and orientation:** The ranch complex faces east with its eastern boundary the Old South Virginia Road, now U. S. Highway 395. A gravel driveway turns into the property between the barn and pasture on the north and the remaining buildings to the south. An orchard is furthestmost to the south on the present site and pasture land is to the north and west. The ranch complex is currently among commercial development on the southern edge of Reno.

A vicinity map and a site map are attached to this report.

2. **Outbuildings:** There are ten outbuildings on the property, the largest six are described below. The other four are all one story, wood framed and sided.

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structures with gable or shed roofs and no foundations. Several are in deteriorated condition. See the site plan for the ranch.

Bunk House

The Bunk House is located between the Dairy/Pump House and the Small Garage and faces to the east. The building is one-story, rectangular-in-plan, wooden framed with no foundation and a side facing, medium pitched gable roof covered with wooden shingles. The exterior openings consist of a double hung, wood framed, six-over-six light windows with a delicate profile, a two panel wooden door on the east, and a six light casement window on the west. Remains of a three foot wide wooden deck run along the length of the east side of the building.

Garage

The garage sits at the west end of the gravel drive. The five bay, rectangular-in-plan, single wall constructed building is covered with vertical boards. The shed roof is corrugated metal over wood shingle. Originally the southern most bay was used for black smithing.

Small Garage

This building is located to the west of the bunk house in a row of buildings facing the driveway area. The small garage is an one-story, wood framed building with no foundation and a medium pitched, front facing, gable roof of wooden shingles. The exterior walls are wide planks laid vertically. The only opening is covered with a double leaf, side hinged doors of horizontal boards. A small shed roof covers an additional two feet of length of the building; the addition was made for a longer automobile.

Attached to the small garage and the wood shed is remnants of a sheepherder's wagon sitting on the ground. It is sided with boards-and-battens and is in deteriorated condition.

Wash House

The Wash House is located to the west of the Ferretto House. It is a one-story, single wall constructed building with no foundation and a side facing, medium pitched gable roof of wooden shingles. The exterior walls are V-groove siding (6 1/2" wide). The only openings are two six-over-six-light, double hung, wood framed, sash windows with delicate profiles and two doors on the east side of the building. Both doors are simple vertical board doors. A hole remains in the roof where a metal stovepipe was removed. A ceramic pipe protrudes through the west side of the roof. A wood stove was used to heat the water for the laundry.

Wood Shed

The wood shed is a small, one story, rectangular-in-plan, wood framed building covered with boards and battens. The gable roof is wood shingled with a pigeon coop attached to the top. A board and batten door is on the north side.

Small Milk Barn

This small barn sits in the pasture northeast of the hay barn. It is a rectangular-in-plan, one story, wood framed building with a shed roof and board and batten siding.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings: None Found

B. Early Views: None Found

C. Interviews:

Louise Ghiggeri Ferretto, wife of John Ferretto who was the brother of Joseph Ferretto. Interview conducted September 12, 1990. 1 PM. at her home 150 West Huffaker Circle, Reno, Nevada.

Genevieve Ferretto Golick, daughter of Joseph and Rose Ferretto. Mrs. Golick grew up on this ranch. Interview conducted September 12, 1990, 2:30 PM at her home at 510 Toiyabe, Reno, Nevada.

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Nevada Department of Transportation is widening U. S. 395 from Foothill Road, Reno, Nevada to the Patriot-Virginia Street Interchange, 0.93 miles to the north. The current five-land stretch of highway will be expanded to accommodate an additional two lanes. Curbs and gutters will be added to control the flow of water. Two complexes of potentially historic buildings within the project area were inventoried: four buildings on the Huffaker site and five buildings on the Ferretto site.

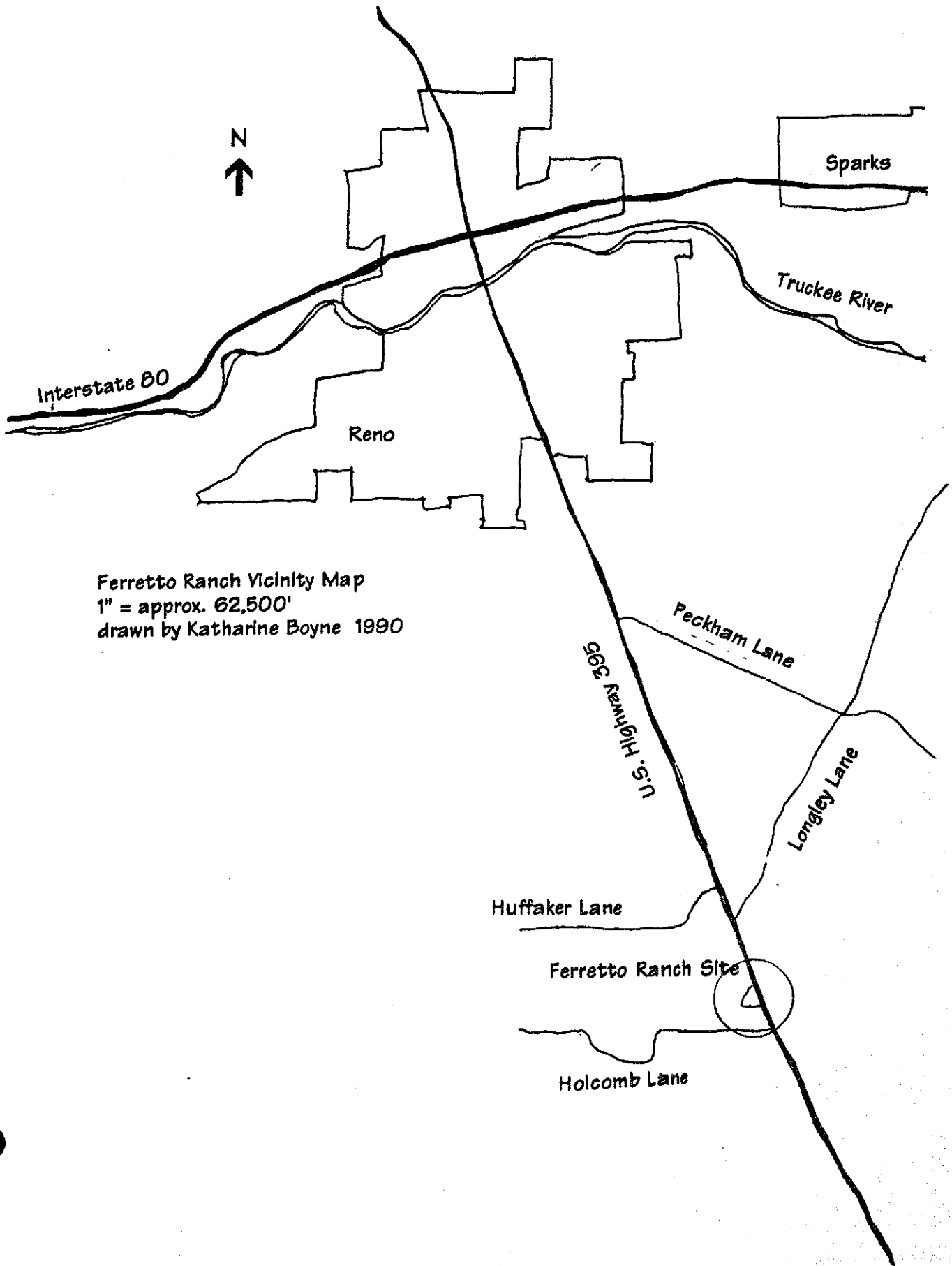
Upon completion of the inventory, it was determined that the Dalton-Ferretto Ranch was eligible to the National Register of Historic Places as a district. It was determined that the project adversely effected the potential historic district as the expansion of the US. Highway 395 along the east or front of the Ferretto Ranch came to within 43 feet of the 1926 brick Bungalow residence. The project alters relevant characteristics of the potential district and specifically alters characteristics of the 1926 residence that qualifies it to the National Register of Historic Places. A Memorandum of Agreement was entered into by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Federal Highway Administration with concurrence by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer and the Nevada Department of Transportation in May 1990 to mitigate the adverse effect by recording the property to HABS standards and planting landscape elements.

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Ferretto Ranch Vicinity Map
1" = approx. 62,500'
drawn by Katharine Boyne 1990

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Ferretto Ranch Site Plan
1" = approx. 80'
drawn by Katharine Boyne 1990

